



Medicare News – October 2016

New Changes to Medicare Drug Plans for 2017

Medicare has just announced the details for the Part D prescription drug plans available for 2017. Beneficiaries can switch their plans during the Annual Enrollment Period that runs from October 15th through December 7th.

Jim Verville, Regional Coordinator for the 10 county Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program said “as is usually the case, there will be several changes in plan offerings, premium costs, and benefit details for Medicare Part D drug plans next year”.

Following are some of the significant highlights of those changes:

- There is a marked reduction in the number of plan offerings. There will be 23 plans available for the new calendar year, or 5 fewer than approved for Michigan Medicare beneficiaries in 2016. In addition, two of the plans for 2017 are currently sanctioned by Medicare due to noncompliance issues, and may not be available at the start of next year.
- The two plans under sanction are sponsored by Cigna-HealthSpring and include their Rx Secure and Rx-Secure-Extra Part D plans. Current members are permitted to remain in these plans for 2017, however, neither are available for new enrollment until the sanction is lifted.
- Several Part D plans have an annual deductible. Medicare has authorized an increase of \$40 to a new ceiling of \$400. Normally, the deductible must be met before the plan will provide any insurance coverage for drugs.
- When the full cost of medications reach \$3,700 in 2017, Medicare beneficiaries enter the donut hole, otherwise known as the gap. This results in significantly higher co-pays for their drugs. The donut hole will increase by \$390 next year. Those who enter the donut hole will pay 40% of the total cost of their brand name drugs and 51% of the full cost for the generic equivalents.

Part D companies are required to notify their subscribers of all of these details in their Annual Notice of Change mailing. Beneficiaries should have already received this information.

While the list of plan offerings is quite extensive and confusing to navigate, there is a very helpful tool available that can be used to compare an existing drug plan with other plans available for 2017. The tool is called the Medicare Plan Finder. To do your own comparisons, or get help in finding the best plan simply select one of the following options:

- If you are comfortable doing your own research, visit the Medicare website at www.medicare.gov. Just click on the green box entitled “Find health & drug plans”, and enter the information requested. You will be given detailed comparisons for each plan, sorted by lowest cost. Enrollment in a new plan can also be done at the same website.
- Also, you can call the Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAAP) at 800-803-7174, and ask to have a prescription drug worksheet mailed to you. Once you complete the form and return it to the MMAAP office, a certified Counselor will review drug plan options and furnish you with recommendations for 2017. Counselors can also help you enroll in a new Part D plan if needed.

Following is a complete list of Medicare prescription drug plans available for 2017:

	Plan Name	Contract ID	Plan ID	National Coverage	Part D Plan Deductible	Monthly Premium
1	AARP MedicareRx Preferred (PDP)	S5820	012	No	\$0	\$60.10
2	AARP MedicareRx Saver Plus (PDP)	S5921	358	No	\$400	\$40.20
3	AARP MedicareRx Walgreens (PDP)	S0522	057	No	\$400	\$22.40
4	Aetna Medicare Rx Saver (PDP)	S5810	047	Yes	\$350	\$33.50
5	Basic Blue Rx (PDP)	S6986	001	No	\$400	\$28.60
6	Cigna-HealthSpring Rx Secure (PDP) SANCTIONED	S5617	221	Yes	\$400	\$20.90
7	Cigna-HealthSpring Rx Secure-Extra (PDP) SANCTIONED	S5617	258	No	\$50	\$29.20
8	EnvisionRxPlus (PDP)	S7694	070	Yes	\$270	\$14.60
9	Express Scripts Medicare - Choice (PDP)	S5660	183	No	\$350	\$79.40
10	Express Scripts Medicare - Value (PDP)	S5660	115	No	\$400	\$39.30
11	First Health Part D Premier Plus (PDP)	S5768	171	No	\$0	\$82.60
12	First Health Part D Value Plus (PDP)	S5768	136	No	\$0	\$39.00
13	Humana Enhanced (PDP)	S5884	071	No	\$0	\$60.80
14	Humana Preferred Rx Plan (PDP)	S5884	136	Yes	\$400	\$29.90
15	Humana Walmart Rx Plan (PDP)	S5884	159	No	\$400	\$17.00
16	Magellan Rx Medicare Basic (PDP)	S4607	013	No	\$400	\$37.00
17	Prescription Blue Option A (PDP)	S5584	001	No	\$400	\$89.00
18	Prescription Blue Option B (PDP)	S5584	002	No	\$0	\$124.80
19	SilverScript Choice (PDP)	S5601	026	Yes	\$0	\$33.50
20	SilverScript Plus (PDP)	S5601	027	No	\$0	\$70.20
21	Symphonix Value Rx (PDP)	S0522	018	Yes	\$400	\$31.00
22	WellCare Classic (PDP)	S4802	084	Yes	\$400	\$29.10
23	WellCare Extra (PDP)	S4802	110	No	\$0	\$61.80

“Drug plan details and costs often change each year so we encourage all Medicare beneficiaries to have their plans reviewed during the fall Medicare Annual Enrollment Period”, said Verville.

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